



Demokracia në Veprim
Demokratija na Delu
Democracy in Action

ELECTION OBSERVATION REPORT FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF KOSOVA EARLY ELECTIONS

ELECTORAL
INTEGRITY 2025

28 DECEMBER 2025



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DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The domestic election observation coalition Democracy in Action (DiA) assesses that the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 were generally conducted in line with democratic standards for free and competitive elections. However, the post-election phase revealed serious shortcomings related to the administration of preferential candidate votes.

The decision to conduct a nationwide recount, following the identification of widespread discrepancies in the counting of candidate votes, constituted the most significant development of this electoral process. Although the recount restored the technical integrity of the final results and did not produce substantial changes in the distribution of mandates among political entities, the scale of corrections – exceeding 240,000 preferential votes in total – significantly affected public perceptions of the credibility of election administration. The transparency of the recount process at the Counting and Results Centre (CRC), including live streaming and detailed publication of data, contributed to stabilizing the situation and consolidating the final results. Nevertheless, the process was marked by an extended timeline, lasting 34 days from Election Day to the announcement of final results and a total of 44 days until their certification by the Central Election Commission (CEC).

Overall, the administration of the electoral process was fundamentally stable and generally positive, although accompanied by institutional, procedural, and political challenges that in certain instances affected both the quality of administration and public perceptions of the process.

Voting on Election Day took place largely in a calm and democratic atmosphere, without serious security incidents that could have undermined electoral integrity. Voter turnout was relatively high, and most irregularities observed by DiA observers were procedural in nature and did not affect the overall outcome of the elections.

Voter identification procedures were largely implemented in accordance with established rules, while assisted voting decreased significantly compared to previous electoral cycles. Cases involving breaches of ballot secrecy and photographing of ballots remained isolated. The timely publication of preliminary results by the CEC, together with their acceptance by major political entities, contributed to maintaining post-election stability.

The performance of the Central Election Commission during these elections reflected a contrast between orderly administration during the preparatory phase and serious challenges during the post-election period. In the pre-election phase and on Election Day, the CEC – supported by its Secretariat – ensured a satisfactory level of transparency and public reporting, including the publication of preliminary results.

Decision-making was largely consensus-based on technical matters; however, sensitive issues such as out-of-country voting, certification procedures, and the composition of electoral bodies were accompanied by political disputes that frequently exceeded the administrative nature of decision-making. The post-election phase represented the most critical stage, following the identification of widespread discrepancies in the counting of preferential candidate votes, which led to a nationwide recount and exposed weaknesses in the organization, training, and oversight of the counting process. Transparency during the recount at the Counting and Results Centre – including live broadcasting and publication of detailed data – helped stabilize the situation and consolidate the results, which were formally certified unanimously by the CEC on 9 February 2026, following the adjudication of complaints by the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) and the Supreme Court.

The certification of political entities was again accompanied by unlawful decisions by the CEC. The initial

refusal to certify the Serb List, despite the fulfilment of legal criteria, was reversed only after intervention by the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel and subsequently confirmed by the Supreme Court. This case demonstrated the influence of political considerations on administrative decision-making and undermined confidence in the institutional independence of the CEC.

The election campaign unfolded in a calm environment without serious security incidents; however, it was characterized by limited enthusiasm and fluctuating participation across political entities and types of organized activities. Campaign activities were largely concentrated in urban centres and indoor settings. The campaign was notably personalized and centralized around party leaders, reducing opportunities for individual parliamentary candidates to gain visibility and articulate independent political platforms.

Nevertheless, the equality of the electoral contest was affected by the use of public resources for electoral purposes. The Government's decision to allocate financial benefits to certain categories of citizens only days before the elections created a perception of executive interference in the electoral environment. While such measures may have had social justification or precedent in previous years, the timing of their adoption and the manner of public communication undermined the principle of a level playing field and blurred the distinction between state functions and party interests.

Gender representation during the campaign and within candidate lists remained largely formal. Women were underrepresented as speakers in campaign activities, and none of the political entities exceeded the legal minimum threshold of approximately 30–35 per cent representation of women on candidate lists, reflecting a lack of political commitment to meaningful empowerment of women in politics.

Political discourse during the campaign was generally more moderate compared to previous electoral processes. The Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel handled a relatively limited number of complaints, and

no sanctioned cases involving inflammatory or hate speech were recorded. However, significant fines were imposed for violations of campaign rules, particularly regarding the placement of campaign materials in public spaces and the misuse of public resources for electoral purposes.

Out-of-country voting represented one of the more sensitive components of these elections. Interest among voters abroad was high, particularly in embassy voting, where turnout exceeded 84 per cent. Nevertheless, postal voting was accompanied by logistical challenges and concerns related to security and institutional oversight.

The voter list continues to represent a structural challenge. Although the CEC undertook steps to clean and verify the register, the total number of registered voters remains significantly higher than Kosovo's resident population, negatively affecting public confidence in the accuracy of the voter register.

Institutions responsible for electoral justice – namely the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel and the Supreme Court – acted professionally and within legal deadlines in adjudicating electoral disputes. Electoral justice was characterized by a relatively limited volume of complaints and the absence of disputes capable of jeopardizing institutional stability. Decisions issued by these bodies contributed to safeguarding procedural integrity and correcting contested administrative decisions, thereby ensuring the protection of electoral rights and the equal application of rules.

The elections were monitored by a large number of observers. In total, more than 19,000 observers were accredited by the CEC, the majority representing political entities. Their broad presence contributed to transparency, particularly on Election Day. However, in later stages – especially during the counting of candidate votes at Municipal Counting Centres – observer presence was more limited and, in some cases, absent. Independent domestic observation therefore remains essential for an objective assessment of the electoral process.

The Central Election Commission demonstrated progress in public outreach through comprehensive voter information and education campaigns, providing detailed materials covering nearly all phases of the electoral process. Increased use of social media and digital platforms enhanced visibility and public access to information, representing a notable improvement compared to previous electoral cycles. Further development of more creative formats aligned with contemporary digital communication trends could strengthen public engagement and the effectiveness of such campaigns.

1. DIA MISSION AND METHODOLOGY

Democracy in Action (DiA) is a coalition of civil society organizations that promotes free and fair elections in Kosovo through systematic observation of electoral processes, voter education, and advocacy for electoral reform.

For the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025, DiA implemented an election observation mission aimed at providing an independent, professional, and comprehensive assessment of the electoral process, with particular focus on Election Day and the adjudication of electoral complaints.

The observation mission relied on the engagement of approximately 700 trained volunteers. Observation activities covered the preparatory phase of the elections, developments during the election campaign, Election Day, and the post-election period – primarily focused on monitoring activities at the Counting and Results Centre (CRC) – with the objective of documenting the regularity of procedures and the overall functioning of electoral institutions.

DiA followed the election campaign through analytical monitoring of public activities, political discourse, and the practices of political entities, with the aim of identifying key trends and issues affecting the quality of electoral competition. In parallel, the mission continuously monitored meetings of the Central Election Commission (CEC) as part of its observation of election administration.

On Election Day, more than 600 volunteers were deployed in the field. Of these, 500 observers were stationed at polling stations in accordance with the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology – an internationally recognized approach based on a statistically representative sample. This methodology enabled DiA to obtain reliable data on the conduct of voting and preliminary election results. Approximately 50 observers deployed as mobile teams monitored the overall atmosphere

in and around polling centres, while an additional 50 volunteers operated within the Data Centre, where field reports were collected, processed, and analysed in real time.

Following Election Day, DiA continued its observation activities, albeit with more limited engagement and capacity. The organization monitored and analysed the work of the Counting and Results Centre both through physical presence on selected occasions and through remote analysis of official data and public announcements. At the same time, DiA's legal team followed the electoral dispute resolution process, monitoring the handling of complaints before the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) and the Supreme Court.

The detailed findings from observation before, during, and after Election Day are presented in this final report, which aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the electoral process and contribute to its future improvement. The methodology applied by DiA adheres to international standards for democratic election observation and is grounded in the principles of impartiality, transparency, and professionalism.

2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

The early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 were held in the context of a deep political and institutional crisis that followed the regular parliamentary elections of 9 February 2025. For nearly ten months after those elections, Kosovo remained without the formation of a new government due to a fragmented parliamentary composition and the inability of political entities to secure the majority required for the constitution of institutions.

The February elections produced a fragmented Assembly in which no political entity succeeded in securing the 61 votes necessary to form a government. Repeated attempts to establish a governing coalition failed, while the lack of consensus on the election of the Speaker of the Assembly – a constitutional precondition for the formation of the executive – prolonged the institutional deadlock for several months. Interventions by the Constitutional Court also failed to produce a sustainable functional solution, leaving the country in a continued state of institutional uncertainty.

This situation directly contributed to the deterioration of the political climate and increased polarization among the main political actors. Public discourse was characterized by mutual accusations regarding responsibility for the deadlock, while institutional communication between political stakeholders declined significantly. These dynamics contributed to a decrease in public trust in representative institutions and in the political process more broadly.

The institutional stalemate produced tangible consequences for state functioning. Legislative activity was largely paralysed, adoption of the state budget was delayed, and several international agreements of financial and developmental importance remained unratified. The inability to take strategic decisions affected Kosovo's capacity to benefit from international support mechanisms and to fulfil obligations related to integration processes.

At the international level, the internal institutional crisis coincided with increased diplomatic pressure to advance the dialogue with Serbia and to implement agreements reached under European Union facilitation. The absence of a government with a full mandate limited the negotiating capacity of state institutions and reinforced perceptions of political instability in the international arena.

Within this context, the elections of 28 December were widely perceived as a decisive moment for restoring institutional functionality and political stability. Public and international expectations for the electoral process were high, and its integrity and credibility were considered essential for rebuilding trust in the democratic system.

Although the February 2025 elections were generally calm and administered without serious security incidents, they had already revealed a number of structural weaknesses in election administration and post-election management. These issues remained largely unaddressed in the period between the two electoral processes, thereby increasing the importance of independent domestic observation. Given the minimal presence of international election observation missions, organized domestic observation assumed an even more significant role in safeguarding transparency, accountability, and public confidence in the electoral process.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework governing parliamentary elections in Kosovo is based on the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the Law on General Elections, the Law on Financing of Political Entities, the Criminal Code, and secondary legislation adopted by the Central Election Commission (CEC). This normative framework aims to ensure that elections are administered in accordance with democratic standards, transparency of the process, and the integrity of political representation.

The early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 were conducted under the Law on General Elections adopted in June 2023, as well as earlier amendments to the Law on Financing of Political Entities adopted in 2022. These elections represented the second practical test of the 2023 "electoral reform" and confirmed that most of the challenges identified during the February 2025 electoral process persisted in the December elections.

Kosovo's electoral system remains a proportional representation system with open lists, in which the entire territory constitutes a single electoral district for the 120 seats of the Assembly. Of these, 20 seats are reserved for non-majority communities – 10 for the Serb community and 10 for other communities. A five per cent electoral threshold applies to political entities competing for the 100 general seats, while this threshold does not apply to entities contesting reserved seats.

Despite expectations for a more comprehensive electoral reform, the 2023 amendments focused primarily on technical and administrative reorganization of electoral processes, leaving a number of structural issues related to electoral integrity unaddressed. Moreover, several of these changes produced direct consequences in practice, affecting the efficiency, transparency, and credibility of the electoral process.

Among the most significant changes was the expansion of out-of-country voting options through the intro-

duction of in-person voting at diplomatic missions and postal voting via designated diplomatic mailboxes. This innovation aimed to increase diaspora participation and reduce risks associated with postal voting manipulation. However, the practical implementation of this model across two electoral processes within the same year demonstrated that the legal and administrative infrastructure remains insufficient to ensure a fully standardized and equally supervised process.

Another amendment with direct impact on election administration was the reintroduction of preferential voting for up to ten candidates. While intended to expand voter choice, in practice this change significantly increased the complexity of the counting process. Furthermore, transferring the counting of preferential votes from polling stations to Municipal Counting Centres resulted in considerable delays and reduced the immediate transparency of the process. The 2025 elections confirmed that this model did not generate added value in terms of electoral integrity while substantially prolonging post-election administration.

Changes to the mechanism for the dismissal of the Chairperson and members of the CEC constitute another institutional development with notable implications. The possibility for dismissal proceedings to be initiated by a two-thirds majority of CEC members was intended to strengthen accountability; however, in practice it has increased perceptions of internal politicization and potentially limited the feasibility of initiating dismissal procedures in the absence of such a majority. In a politically polarized environment, this mechanism creates potential risks of political pressure on election administration.

Regarding the financing of political entities, amendments adopted in 2022 strengthened financial reporting requirements and transparency obligations. Nevertheless, effective monitoring of campaign expenditures – particularly in the digital sphere and on social media

platforms – remains an unresolved challenge. The existing framework does not provide sufficient mechanisms for real-time oversight of spending, thereby creating opportunities for underreporting or circumvention of reporting requirements.

With respect to gender equality, the legal quota of 30 per cent representation for the less represented gender continues to apply to candidate lists and seat allocation. While this mechanism guarantees minimum representation, the 2025 elections demonstrated that it remains largely formal and has not produced substantial progress toward genuine equality in political representation.

Overall, the experience of two electoral processes within 2025 confirmed that the legislative amendments introduced in 2023 did not address the fundamental shortcomings of the electoral system. On the contrary, some of the adopted changes generated new operational and institutional challenges. Most of the problems identified in election administration, vote counting, and post-election procedures are directly linked to the design of the recent amendments, underscoring the need for a deeper and more comprehensive review of the electoral legal framework.

4. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Based on the applicable constitutional and legal provisions, the body responsible for the preparation, supervision, management, and verification of all activities related to the electoral process, as well as for the announcement of results, is the Central Election Commission (CEC). In exercising its mandate, the CEC is supported by the CEC Secretariat, which serves as the professional and administrative structure responsible for the technical implementation of decisions.

At the local level, election administration is carried out through Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), established in each of Kosovo's 38 municipalities, while on Election Day the process is managed by Polling Station Committees composed of five to seven members.

Municipal Counting Centres (MCCs) serve as locations for the receipt of electoral materials, verification of votes for political entities, and counting of candidate votes. They also function as venues for training election management bodies. Following Election Day, the counting of conditional ballots, out-of-country votes, and any subsequent recounts takes place at the Counting and Results Centre (CRC), in accordance with CEC decisions.

The administration of the early elections of 28 December 2025 took place in a politically charged environment and within a compressed timeframe, which directly affected the pace and quality of technical and organizational preparations. Despite these constraints, the election administration succeeded in carrying out most planned operations, although notable challenges remained in institutional coordination, time management, and public communication.

4.1. Work of the Central Election Commission

The Central Election Commission remains the constitutional institution responsible for organizing, directing, and verifying all electoral operations in the Republic of Kosovo. The early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 were conducted within a complex institutional context and under an accelerated electoral calendar, placing the election administration under exceptional organizational pressure. In this context, the performance of the CEC reflected a combination of positive elements during the preparatory phase and serious challenges during the post-election period.

From the announcement of the election date onward, the CEC held approximately 30 public meetings, during which key decisions concerning the administration of the process were adopted. Meetings were generally open to the public, enabling continuous monitoring by civil society and the media. During the preparatory phase and on Election Day, the work of the CEC Secretariat demonstrated a satisfactory level of professionalism. The publication of preliminary results, real-time reporting, and a proactive approach to data disclosure were managed transparently.

Decision-making was largely consensus-based, particularly on technical matters. However, several sensitive issues generated pronounced political disagreements among Commission members. Debates concerning out-of-country voting, certification of political entities, and the composition of electoral bodies frequently moved beyond administrative considerations and assumed a distinctly political and partisan character. This reflected an ongoing tension between the political role of CEC members and the need for impartial technical administration of the electoral process.

The early elections were conducted within a compressed timeline. Despite this, the CEC succeeded in

appointing more than 11,000 polling staff and organizing accelerated training for election management bodies. The use of technology for reporting and data management contributed to the standardization of certain technical processes, although operational challenges persisted.

A recurring feature throughout the process was the direct involvement of the politically appointed composition of the CEC in decision-making of a technical and administrative nature. Interventions in matters typically falling within the competence of the Secretariat created additional institutional burdens and, in some instances, slowed operational processes. This overlap between political and administrative functions remains a structural weakness of the current election administration model.

The post-election phase represented the most critical stage of the process. Allegations of irregularities in the counting of preferential candidate votes at Municipal Counting Centres triggered a significant crisis of public confidence. Initially, the CEC ordered verification of two per cent of polling stations following analysis of video recordings and identification of serious discrepancies in several locations. This verification revealed substantial deviations in candidate vote counts in certain municipalities, with differences reaching hundreds of votes per polling station. These findings exceeded the margins of ordinary human error and indicated systemic shortcomings in the counting process.

On 13 January, the CEC decided to conduct a full recount in ten municipalities (Prizren, Ferizaj, Sкендерaj, Shtime, Vushtrri, Dragash, Mamusha, Kaçanik, Leposaviq, and Ranillug), as well as a recount of ten per cent of polling stations in the remainder of the country. Democracy in Action (DiA) assessed at the time that this measure was insufficient to restore public confidence and recommended a nationwide recount. During this period, several CEC members and political actors attempted to minimize the significance of the discrepancies, arguing that their impact on the final outcome was limited, as recounts resulted in only one mandate change. Nevertheless, the existence of tens of thousands of miscounted votes constituted a fundamental issue of public trust, irrespective of its impact on parliamentary mandates.

Following increased public pressure and continued evidence of discrepancies, the CEC decided on 19 January to conduct a nationwide recount. This decision represented the most significant corrective intervention in the electoral process and a necessary step to safeguard the integrity of the results. The recount concluded on 30 January after operational capacities at the Counting and Results Centre were expanded, nearly doubling the number of counting tables and introducing two working shifts.

However, institutional management of the final phase was accompanied by serious procedural controversies. On 31 January, the CEC proceeded with the announcement of final results without observing the legally prescribed 48-hour deadline for submitting complaints related to the counting process. Additionally, the procedure concerning the results of the political entity Serb List was separated from the broader process, creating a problematic precedent in the interpretation of procedural rules. This decision was subsequently overturned by the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) following an appeal submitted by the Serb List, resulting in the announcement of results for that political entity as well.

Meanwhile, investigations initiated by law enforcement authorities – initially in the municipality of Prizren – led to the arrest of a considerable number of individuals suspected of manipulation during the counting process. The CEC's decision to dismiss the Municipal Election Commission in Prizren constituted an important accountability measure, although similar action was not applied consistently in other municipalities where problems were identified.

Overall, the CEC's performance during these elections reflected a contrast between professional and transparent administration in the initial stages and a difficult management of the counting crisis, which exposed weaknesses in the separation between the institution's political and administrative roles. While the decision to conduct a nationwide recount protected the integrity of the results, the handling of the crisis affected public perceptions of the credibility of election administration.

4.2. Municipal Election Commissions and Polling Station Committees

Municipal Election Commissions (MECs) constitute the key link between the central election administration and polling station-level structures, bearing responsibility for the practical implementation of electoral operations at the local level. Their role includes logistical preparation of the process, coordination of Polling Station Committees, training of election staff, and management of electoral materials.

Democracy in Action did not conduct structured and systematic observation of the work of Municipal Election Commissions during this electoral period. Consequently, this report does not provide a direct empirical assessment of their administrative performance.

However, based on publicly available information, reports issued by the Central Election Commission, and post-election developments related to the counting process, the functioning of certain municipal structures became part of public debate, particularly in municipalities where significant discrepancies were identified during the recount of preferential candidate votes.

4.3. Work at Municipal Counting Centres

Municipal Counting Centres (MCCs) played a central role in the administration of the counting process for preferential candidate votes, one of the most sensitive components of these elections. Under the applicable legal framework, the counting of candidate votes takes place outside polling stations, in centralized municipal facilities, with the aim of standardizing procedures and strengthening institutional oversight of the process.

Democracy in Action did not conduct permanent structured observation within Municipal Counting Centres due to operational and financial limitations. Moreover, the dynamics of the counting process itself negatively affected opportunities for external oversight. The counting of candidate votes took place immediately following Election Day – specifically on 29, 30, and 31 December and during the first days of January – coinciding with the official holiday period. As a result, in many Municipal Counting Centres entire days of counting were con-

ducted without the presence of observers, limiting the level of monitoring and transparency of the process.

Although DiA does not provide a direct empirical assessment of the day-to-day work of MCCs, post-election developments related to the recount process placed the functioning of these centres at the centre of public and institutional debate.

The initial verification of a two per cent sample of polling stations, initiated by the Central Election Commission following the review of camera recordings, identified significant discrepancies between results counted at MCCs and those verified during the recount. In several municipalities, differences in preferential candidate votes reached hundreds of votes per polling station, indicating that the problems were not isolated and raising serious concerns regarding the accuracy of the counting process.

These findings initially led to the decision to conduct a full recount in ten municipalities and partial recounts elsewhere in the country, before the CEC ultimately decided to proceed with a nationwide recount. The fact that such a large proportion of polling stations exhibited substantial discrepancies points to structural shortcomings in the organization, training, and oversight of the counting process at the municipal level.

The nationwide recount, although necessary to restore public confidence, also exposed the fragility of the current centralized model for counting preferential votes. The heavy administrative workload, time pressure, and the complexity of preferential voting allowing selection of up to ten candidates significantly increased the risk of errors and deviations during the process.

The experience of these elections reiterates the need for a comprehensive review of the counting model applied in Municipal Counting Centres. The integrity of electoral results depends not only on the proper conduct of voting but equally on the accuracy of vote counting.

4.4. Work at the Counting and Results Centre

The Counting and Results Centre (CRC) represents the final stage of election administration. This phase includes verification of electoral materials, counting of conditional ballots and out-of-country votes, as well as the conduct of any recounts ordered by the Central Election Commission (CEC) or electoral dispute resolution bodies. For these elections, the CRC became the central focal point of the post-election process due to the volume of recount activities.

Democracy in Action did not conduct continuous and systematic observation at the CRC due to operational and financial constraints. Nevertheless, the mission carried out ad hoc visits and direct verification of procedures during both the counting and recount periods and followed developments through direct communication channels with responsible CEC officials. The overall presence of observers from other organizations – particularly media representatives and political entity observers – was satisfactory, contributing to a relatively open environment for observation.

The process of receiving and verifying electoral materials at the CRC was generally conducted in an orderly manner, despite a heavy operational workload. The counting of conditional ballots and out-of-country votes followed established procedures, including administrative control and verification of supporting documentation. Postal ballots and out-of-country voting constituted a technically sensitive component of the process; however, their administration at the CRC did not generate major procedural disputes, except for allegations concerning the acceptance of ballot packages beyond certain legal deadlines. Nevertheless, the large volume of materials and time pressure affected the pace of work and prolonged the final stage of the electoral process.

Following verification of the initial two per cent sample of polling stations, which confirmed significant discrepancies in the counting of preferential candidate votes, the CRC faced the implementation of a nationwide recount. The full recount lasted more than two weeks and concluded on 30 January. To manage this workload, oper-

ational capacities were substantially increased through the near doubling of counting tables – from approximately 20 to 38 – operating in two working shifts.

One of the most positive aspects of operations at the CRC was the level of transparency achieved during the process. As in Municipal Counting Centres, each counting table was monitored by cameras and the process was live-streamed, enabling real-time monitoring by the public, media, and political stakeholders. This measure established a high standard of transparency and significantly reduced suspicions of interference during the recount.

Following completion of the recount of each ballot box, and in order to further enhance transparency, the CEC published detailed results reflecting changes produced by the recount on its official platform. Data were made publicly accessible at national, municipal, and polling station levels, including breakdowns for each political entity and each individual candidate. This detailed publication represents an important transparency practice and a positive precedent for public documentation of result corrections.

Nevertheless, the very necessity of a nationwide recount exposed serious shortcomings in earlier stages of counting administration at the municipal level. The recount confirmed the existence of a very large number of discrepancies in preferential candidate votes. Although the formal impact on mandate allocation was minimal, the scale of deviations raised serious concerns regarding the integrity of individual vote administration and public confidence in the process.

During the recount period, work at the CRC was conducted under significant time pressure and operational strain. Overall, operations at the CRC demonstrated that the electoral system possesses mechanisms for self-correction through recount procedures and transparency measures. However, this correction occurred as a response to a profound crisis of public confidence and came at considerable cost in time and, particularly, public perception. The technical integrity of the final results was restored – at least formally – through the nationwide recount, but the process exposed structural weaknesses requiring systemic remedies.

4.5. Certification of Political Entities and their Candidates

The certification process for political entities and their candidates for the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 was conducted within a short time-frame, from 24 to 30 November 2025. During this period, 24 political entities applied for certification, nominating a total of 1,180 candidates for the Assembly.

Overall, the Central Election Commission (CEC) approved the applications of political entities; however, the process was accompanied by decisions that again raised concerns regarding political influence over administrative decision-making. The most problematic case remained the initial refusal to certify the Serb List. In this electoral cycle as well, the CEC denied certification of this political entity despite a recommendation from the Office for Political Party Registration confirming that the legal criteria had been fulfilled. The decision was overturned by the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) and subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court, both of which found the CEC's action unlawful. The repetition of this case across several consecutive electoral cycles deepens perceptions of inconsistency and undermines confidence in the independence of election administration in matters that should remain strictly procedural.

Another notable case concerned the refusal to certify candidate Ena Krasniqi from the Vakati Coalition list. Electoral dispute resolution bodies concluded that a formal interpretation of ethnic affiliation based solely on family ties contradicted the principle of authentic representation of non-majority communities. This decision established an important standard for safeguarding affirmative measures and preventing their misuse.

The composition of candidate lists reflected a continuation of established political practices. Of the 1,180 candidates, 789 were men (67 per cent) and 391 were women (33 per cent). Although the legal gender quota of 30 per cent was formally met, women's representation remained largely symbolic. None of the major political entities exceeded approximately 35 per cent representation of women, indicating a lack of political willingness to move beyond minimum legal requirements.

The age structure of candidates also revealed a relatively homogeneous profile. The 41–50 age group constituted the largest share of candidates, followed by those aged 31–40. Youth representation remained limited, while candidates over the age of 65 represented only a small proportion of lists. The average age of candidates among major political entities ranged between 42 and 46 years, confirming the dominance of established political profiles.

A notable characteristic of these elections was the high level of candidate recycling. A total of 524 candidates (44 per cent) had also competed in the parliamentary elections of 9 February 2025, while 362 candidates (31 per cent) had participated in the local elections held the same year. In total, 149 candidates (13 per cent) ran in both electoral processes.

The certification process was also influenced by legislative amendments adopted in 2023, which lowered the legal eligibility threshold for candidacy. Disqualification from participation applies only to individuals sentenced to effective imprisonment exceeding one year, thereby allowing candidacy for persons convicted with suspended sentences, fines, or alternative sanctions, including cases related to corruption offences.

Overall, the certification process demonstrated that the election administration succeeded in completing procedures within legal deadlines, while simultaneously exposing weaknesses related to decision-making independence and integrity standards. The composition of candidate lists confirms the continuation of existing representation patterns, namely minimal gender inclusion, limited youth participation, and a high degree of candidate recycling.

4.6. Certification of the Voter List and Voter Services

The Final Voter List for the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 was compiled by the Central Election Commission (CEC) based on data from the Central Civil Registry administered by the Civil Registration Agency within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. For the preparation of the list, the CEC received several data extracts from the Civil Status Department and the

Department for Document Production, which were used to verify and update voter information through inter-institutional data comparisons.

The initial extract of the Central Civil Registry, received on 21 November 2025, contained 2,082,699 voters. Following the verification process, 6,360 individuals were removed from the list, including persons identified as deceased through comparison with data from the Pension Department and verifications conducted by municipal civil registration offices, as well as persons over 100 years of age identified through comparison with data from the 2024 Population Census. At the same time, citizens who had submitted requests for inclusion or correction during the Voter Services period were added to the list.

The Final Voter List for these elections contained 2,076,290 voters. Although the cleaning process resulted in a reduction of the overall number, the total number of registered voters remains significantly higher than Kosovo's resident population according to the most recent census. This discrepancy continues to represent a persistent issue that directly affects public perceptions regarding the accuracy of the voter register and the integrity of the electoral process. Compared with the parliamentary elections of February 2025, the net increase in the voter list was modest and is primarily attributable to newly eligible voters who reached voting age between the two electoral processes.

Of the total number of voters, 1,999,204 were registered to vote within Kosovo, while 77,016 voters were included in the out-of-country voting list. The CEC continued to seek cooperation with relevant institutions to update voter data; however, the absence of an integrated and automated system for synchronizing state registries remains a significant obstacle to the comprehensive cleaning of the voter list.

As part of preparations for the final voter list, the CEC provided Voter Services from 26 November to 7 December 2025. During this period, citizens were able to verify their personal data, confirm their polling centre, and request corrections or changes to their polling location. Although this mechanism remains an important tool for updating the voter register, the limited timeframe

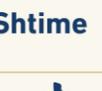
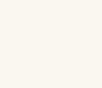
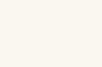
constrained broader correction of inaccuracies and effective communication with voters, particularly in municipalities with heavy administrative workloads.

With regard to voting arrangements, the CEC approved the operation of 948 polling centres across Kosovo, including 910 regular polling centres and 38 conditional voting centres. In total, 2,614 polling stations were established, comprising 2,557 regular polling stations and 57 conditional polling stations. Conditional polling stations served to accommodate specific cases of voters who were not listed at their usual polling centre.

Overall, the CEC fulfilled its legal obligations regarding the compilation of the voter list and the organization of polling centres. Nevertheless, the continued discrepancy between the number of registered voters and the country's resident population remains a serious challenge. This issue extends beyond a single electoral cycle and requires long-term reforms in civil registry management and interinstitutional coordination.

| MUNICIPALITY | NUMBER OF VOTERS | POLLING CENTRES (including conditional) | POLLING STATIONS (including conditional) |
|--|---|---|---|
|  Deçan |  41,138 |  15 |  51 |
|  Gjakova |  120,712 |  37 |  147 |
|  Drenas |  56,671 |  32 |  74 |
|  Gjilan |  104,870 |  38 |  132 |
|  Dragash |  41,012 |  34 |  58 |
|  Istog |  50,553 |  23 |  63 |
|  Kaçanik |  33,070 |  22 |  46 |
|  Klina |  50,711 |  22 |  64 |
|  Fushe Kosova |  52,006 |  17 |  65 |

| MUNICIPALITY | NUMBER OF VOTERS | POLLING CENTRES (including conditional) | POLLING STATIONS (including conditional) |
|--|--|---|--|
|  Kamenica |  33,056 |  29 |  51 |
|  South Mitrovica |  81,478 |  33 |  104 |
|  Leposaviq |  12,453 |  19 |  26 |
|  Lipjan |  64,840 |  35 |  86 |
|  Novoberda |  10,037 |  19 |  24 |
|  Obiliq |  25,583 |  15 |  34 |
|  Rahovec |  59,309 |  35 |  79 |
|  Peja |  117,413 |  31 |  141 |
|  Podujeva |  84,396 |  48 |  112 |

| MUNICIPALITY | NUMBER OF VOTERS | POLLING CENTRES (including conditional) | POLLING STATIONS (including conditional) |
|---|--|---|--|
|  Prishtina |  219,516 |  55 |  270 |
|  Prizren |  187,233 |  77 |  238 |
|  Skenderaj |  53,329 |  34 |  74 |
|  Shtime |  27,783 |  16 |  35 |
|  Shterpca |  12,359 |  10 |  18 |
|  Suhareka |  70,191 |  35 |  90 |
|  Ferizaj |  121,287 |  48 |  155 |
|  Viti |  49,162 |  31 |  65 |
|  Vushtrri |  74,580 |  33 |  97 |

| MUNICIPALITY | NUMBER OF VOTERS | POLLING CENTRES (including conditional) | POLLING STATIONS (including conditional) |
|--|---|---|---|
|  Zubin Potok |  6,498 |  13 |  16 |
|  Zvečan |  6,871 |  7 |  12 |
|  Malisheva |  56,894 |  36 |  76 |
|  Junik |  5,480 |  2 |  7 |
|  Mamusha |  4,683 |  2 |  7 |
|  Hani i Elezit |  8,683 |  5 |  12 |
|  Graçanica |  24,414 |  15 |  34 |
|  Ranillug |  4,856 |  8 |  11 |
|  Partesh |  4,772 |  4 |  8 |

| MUNICIPALITY | NUMBER OF VOTERS | POLLING CENTRES (including conditional) | POLLING STATIONS (including conditional) |
|--|---|--|---|
|  Klokot |  4,139 |  6 |  9 |
|  North Mitrovica |  17,531 |  7 |  23 |



NUMBER OF VOTERS



1,999,204

POLLING CENTRES
(including conditional)



948

POLLING STATIONS
(including conditional)



2,533

4.7 Out-of-Country Voting

Out-of-country voting for the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 constituted one of the most complex components of election administration, due to compressed timelines and logistical organization across multiple countries. The registration process for voters abroad took place from 26 November to 6 December 2025. Following the review of applications and appeals by the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP), the final list included 77,016 voters. In accordance with the law, these voters were removed from the in-country voter list.

The organization of in-person voting abroad was initially accompanied by an institutional dispute concerning the location of polling centres. The Central Election Commission (CEC) initially decided that voting would take place at 50 diplomatic missions, comprising 66 polling stations across 36 countries. The same decision also envisaged the establishment of additional polling centres outside diplomatic premises, based on recommendations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora.

This decision was challenged before the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel, which annulled the portion of the decision allowing polling centres outside diplomatic missions, finding that such a practice was inconsistent with the applicable legal framework. ECAP emphasized that limiting voting to diplomatic premises serves as a safeguard for the integrity of the vote and does not constitute an unjustified restriction for voters abroad. The debate surrounding this decision exposed significant political tensions and mutual accusations of institutional overreach, contributing to the politicization of this component of election administration.

In-person voting abroad took place on 27 December 2025 at 29 diplomatic missions of the Republic of Kosovo – namely 16 embassies and 13 consulates across 18 countries. A total of 19,187 voters were registered for this voting modality, of whom 16,165 cast their ballots, representing a turnout of 84.24 per cent. Voting was conducted during official polling hours and was limited to voters previously registered for this method.

Regarding postal voting, approximately 58,000 voters were registered under this modality. In addition to the CEC postal mailbox in Kosovo, postal boxes were established in 23 countries. The distribution of ballots began on 14 December 2025. According to official data, the vast majority of ballot shipments reached voters successfully, while incomplete deliveries were primarily linked to incorrect addresses or the absence of recipients at the time of delivery.

Approximately 69,000 envelopes were received from voters abroad. Following verification at the Counting and Results Centre (CRC), around 63,000 envelopes were approved, while fewer than 5,000 were rejected for procedural and technical reasons, including attempted double voting, envelopes lacking postal stamps, and multiple submissions from the same voter.

Overall, out-of-country voting demonstrated a high and consistent level of diaspora engagement in the democratic process. Nevertheless, this segment remains among the most sensitive components of election administration, with persistent challenges related to logistics, security, transparency, and institutional credibility, which require systematic solutions beyond individual electoral cycles.

5. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

According to analysis and observations by Democracy in Action (DiA), the election campaign for the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 was conducted in a generally calm environment and without serious security incidents. Political activities took place regularly throughout the country, reflecting active competition among political entities. However, compared to previous electoral cycles, a lower level of citizen mobilization was observed, both in participation at public events and in the overall intensity of campaign activities on the ground.

Citizen participation in campaign activities varied significantly among political entities and forms of organization. While major rallies and candidate list presentations attracted broader attendance, most activities were characterized by moderate or limited participation and were primarily held in indoor venues. The geographical outreach of campaign activities was largely concentrated in urban centres and municipalities with greater electoral weight, while smaller municipalities were less represented in political agendas. This concentration reflected a strategic focus by political entities on electorally influential areas but simultaneously limited exposure of parts of the electorate to competing programmatic platforms.

The campaign was notably personalized and centralized. In the vast majority of public activities, dominant figures were party leaders or prime ministerial candidates, while parliamentary candidates played secondary and largely supportive roles. Even when activities were organized without the presence of party leaders, these were generally smaller meetings with limited public impact. This organizational model reduced opportunities for direct programmatic presentation by parliamentary candidates and constrained pluralism of messaging within political entities, concentrating political communication around central personalities rather than policy platforms.

Representation and inclusiveness remained among the most prominent challenges of the campaign. Women were underrepresented as speakers at public events, and in a considerable number of activities no women appeared in representative roles. Although gender representation on candidate lists formally met legal requirements, campaign dynamics demonstrated that women's effective access to public visibility and political exposure remained limited. Similarly, young people were primarily present in organizational, mobilization, and logistical roles, while their participation in representative and decision-making positions was limited. Persons with disabilities were almost entirely absent throughout the campaign period, both in terms of representation and participation in public activities, reflecting structural shortcomings in political inclusion.

Political discourse during the campaign focused primarily on economic, social, and security-related issues. Topics such as employment, wages, social welfare, education, healthcare, infrastructure, and Euro-Atlantic orientation dominated the public messaging of political entities. Promises related to salary increases and the strengthening of social schemes were among the most frequently articulated themes, appearing across nearly all electoral platforms regardless of ideological differences among contestants. However, in many cases these promises were accompanied by limited detail regarding implementation mechanisms and financial costs, thereby constraining substantive public debate on their feasibility.

Regarding campaign tone, political language was largely mobilizing and critical toward political opponents, but without escalation into offensive or discriminatory rhetoric. Instances of inflammatory or insulting language were isolated and did not constitute a defining feature of the campaign, marking a noticeable change compared to previous elections. This development suggests an effort by political entities to maintain a more controlled level of public communication, although

6. ELECTION OBSERVATION

political polarization remained present in campaign content.

Political entities made extensive use of direct meetings, traditional media, and digital platforms as their primary communication channels. Intensive use of social media expanded the reach of political messaging and increased interaction with citizens, while simultaneously contributing to the simplification of political discourse and a shift from programmatic debate toward shorter, symbolic messaging. This trend reflects the gradual transformation of electoral communication, in which form increasingly gains prominence alongside content.

Although the campaign unfolded without major incidents, the issue of equality of electoral competition remained a concern. DiA identified cases involving the use of public resources for electoral purposes. The Government's decision to distribute financial benefits to pensioners and children only days before Election Day constituted an intervention with direct impact on the electoral environment. While such measures may have social justification, the timing of their adoption and the manner of public communication created a perception of the use of state resources for political advantage, thereby undermining the principle of a level playing field and public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.

The early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 were conducted under the observation of a considerable number of stakeholders, including representatives of political entities, civil society organizations, media outlets, and several international actors. In total, the Central Election Commission accredited 19,254 observers, demonstrating a high level of interest in monitoring and ensuring the transparency of the electoral process.

The vast majority of accredited observers represented political entities, which collectively accredited 17,614 observers. This composition reflects the continuing dominant role of political parties in election observation, particularly at the polling station level and during vote counting. At the same time, the predominance of party-affiliated observers underscores the importance of balancing such presence with independent and professional observation.

Civil society was represented by 809 accredited observers, contributing to the independent monitoring of the electoral process, including Election Day, vote counting, and post-election procedures. The only domestic observation mission was Democracy in Action, which accredited and deployed a network of approximately 600 observers across the entire territory of Kosovo. Observation activities covered the pre-election period, campaign developments, Election Day, and the post-election phase – primarily focused on monitoring the work of the Counting and Results Centre (CRC) – with the aim of documenting procedural compliance and the overall functioning of electoral institutions.

The presence of domestic observation organizations remains particularly important in a context marked by the reduced deployment of international missions and the growing responsibility of local actors in safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process.

In addition, 121 observers from international organizations and 13 representatives of diplomatic missions

7. ELECTION DAY

were accredited for these elections, while media monitoring was conducted by 554 journalists from domestic media outlets and 77 representatives of international media. Furthermore, 66 observers were accredited from state institutions, in accordance with the applicable legal framework.

The scheduling of elections at the end of December, during the year-end holiday period, affected the overall level of observation, particularly by international missions. As a result, domestic observation and civil society organizations assumed an even more significant role in ensuring comprehensive coverage of the electoral process. Overall, the high number of accredited observers contributed positively to enhancing the transparency of the process.

Democracy in Action (DiA) observed the conduct of Election Day through 500 short-term observers deployed across 500 polling stations based on a representative sample. Reporting on the conduct of voting and the counting of preliminary results for political entities was carried out using the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology, enabling the mission to obtain reliable and verifiable nationwide data.

Democracy in Action assesses that Election Day was conducted in a generally calm and democratic atmosphere, without serious incidents that could have undermined the overall integrity of the process. The process was characterized by orderly administration and general adherence to fundamental electoral procedures. The irregularities observed were primarily procedural and technical in nature, unevenly distributed, and did not affect the final election results.

Nevertheless, the nature of some of these irregularities revealed persistent structural shortcomings in election administration, particularly regarding the consistent implementation of rules in the field.

Voter Identification and the Voter List

Throughout Election Day, no systematic cases were reported of voters being identified using documents issued by other states or UNMIK documents. In the vast majority of polling stations, no such cases were recorded, while isolated incidents were limited in number. This represents a positive indication of compliance with basic identification rules and increased awareness among election officials regarding the importance of electoral integrity.

By contrast, voter identification using expired Kosovo documents was more widespread. Such cases were reported in approximately one-third of polling stations. Although most involved small numbers of voters, the presence of this practice indicates inconsistent implementation of rules and a lack of clarity among polling staff in interpreting applicable procedures.

One of the most frequently reported issues on Election Day concerned voters experiencing difficulties locating their names on the Voter List. Only about one-third of polling stations reported no such cases, while the remainder recorded incidents ranging from sporadic occurrences to situations involving a more significant number of affected voters. This issue was primarily linked to changes in polling station assignments and insufficient voter information. In addition to creating confusion among voters, the situation caused unnecessary delays at some polling centers.

Complaints alleging that another person had signed on behalf of a voter were rare and isolated, with no indication of a systemic problem. This suggests that, despite technical challenges, the fundamental integrity of the voter list remained largely intact.

Assisted Voting

The stricter implementation of assisted voting rules resulted in a significant reduction of this practice compared to previous electoral processes. Less than 1% of voters cast ballots with assistance, representing a notable improvement in limiting potential abuse. This indicates that measures introduced by the election administration for stricter oversight produced measurable results.

In the vast majority of polling stations, commissioners required medical documentation or other supporting evidence before permitting assisted voting, reflecting stricter enforcement of the relevant rules. At the same time, cases were reported where voters were denied assisted voting due to a lack of required documentation despite requesting assistance. Such situations were observed in more than 55% of polling stations, and in approximately 7% of them occurred in more than ten cases during the day.

Instances where younger voters requested assisted voting were rare and isolated. Failure to record assisted voting in the Polling Station Register was observed in only about 10% of polling stations and typically involved a limited number of cases.

Secrecy of the Vote and Other Procedural Irregularities

In most polling stations, the rule prohibiting more than one voter from being present behind the voting booth – except in permitted assisted voting cases – was respected. However, in approximately 20% of polling stations where irregularities were recorded, isolated cases (up to ten incidents per station) were reported in which this principle was not respected, creating potential risks to ballot secrecy.

Ballot photographing, although limited in scale, continued to appear in these elections. A total of 32 such cases were reported during Election Day. While the number remains relatively low, the phenomenon remains concerning due to its potential connection to vote buying, voter intimidation, and distortion of voters' free choice.

Closing of Polling Stations and Counting commencement

Voting concluded on time in the vast majority of polling stations. In a limited number of cases, voters were still waiting in line at 19:00 and were allowed to vote in accordance with legal procedures. Early closures or significant delays were extremely rare and had no meaningful impact on the process.

During the initial counting phase, only isolated cases were reported involving discrepancies in ballot codes or serial numbers, as well as sporadic attempts to count candidate votes at polling stations. These incidents were not widespread and did not affect the overall conduct of the process.

8. RESULTS AND THE POST-ELECTION PROCESS

Publication of Results and Post-Election Developments

The rapid and nearly complete publication of preliminary results by the Central Election Commission – with over 99% of results published within a few hours – represents one of the most positive aspects of this electoral process. The stable functioning of digital systems marked a clear improvement compared to previous election cycles and significantly contributed to transparency and public confidence.

The prompt acceptance of results by major political entities also helped maintain a calm post-election environment and reflected a higher level of political maturity.

DiA Preliminary Results

According to data collected by observers of Democracy in Action (DiA), overall voter turnout by the close of polling stations reached 45%, with a margin of error of $\pm 0.76\%$. This percentage does not include conditional votes, out-of-country votes, or votes cast by persons with special needs.

Voter turnout increased progressively throughout election day and remained relatively consistent across observed time intervals. By 12:00, turnout had reached 13.7%, while by 17:00 it had risen to 38.8%. These figures indicate gradual voter engagement, with voting activity intensifying during afternoon hours.

Based on preliminary Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) data collected by DiA observers in the field, the preliminary results for political entities – excluding conditional votes, out-of-country votes, and votes of persons with special needs – were as follows:

Preliminary results of the DnV on Election Day

| | |
|---|---|
| Vetëvendosje Movement (LVV) | 48,56% (margin of error $\pm 1.44\%$) |
| Democratic Party of Kosova (PDK) | 20,97% (margin of error $\pm 1.27\%$) |
| Democratic League of Kosova (LDK) | 13,40% (margin of error $\pm 0.72\%$) |
| Alliance for the Future of Kosova (AAK) | 5,24% (margin of error $\pm 1.60\%$) |
| Social Democratic Initiative (NISMA) | 1,77% (margin of error $\pm 0.53\%$) |
| Srpska Lista (SL) | 5,24% (margin of error $\pm 1.60\%$) |
| Za Slobodu, Pravdu i Opstanak (SPO) | 0,61% (margin of error $\pm 0.17\%$) |

The Post-Election Process

The post-election phase of the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 was characterized by a prolonged and intensive results verification process, dominated by a nationwide full recount of candidates' preferential votes. From Election Day until the announcement of final results on 31 January 2026, a total of 34 days elapsed, while 44 days passed until their certification by the CEC on 9 February. This period exceeds expectations for a routine administrative process, but in this case it was directly linked to the scale of corrections identified during counting.

Certification of the final results took place after the completion of appeal procedures before the competent bodies. Following the publication of results, a total of seven complaints related to the final stage of the process were filed with the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP). Six of these cases were further appealed to the Supreme Court. All complaints were rejected, confirming the validity of the announced results. After the conclusion of this legal process, on 9 February 2026, the CEC certified the final results by unanimous decision. Certification marked the formal conclusion of the electoral cycle and the transition of the process into the phase of institutional implementation of the results.

Unlike previous electoral cycles, where the main challenges were related to the publication of results or technical failures of digital systems, this post-election process was defined primarily by the need for substantial review of preferential votes. The recount represented a broad corrective process intended to address problems arising from massive discrepancies – especially in candidate votes – between data produced through counting in Municipal Counting Centres and recounts conducted at the Counting and Results Centre.

In total, the recount process produced 242,616 changes in preferential votes, including 131,093 negative corrections (vote removals) and 111,523 positive corrections (vote additions). This volume of discrepancies clearly exceeds the level of "human error" that might be expected in a large-scale counting process. These figures do not represent the physical disappearance

or addition of votes; rather, they reflect revisions in the recording of candidate preferences during the tabulation phase. Although the net balance of changes remains negative – by around 20,000 votes – the primary significance lies not in the net difference itself, but in the very high volume of corrections that had to be made after the initial counting process.

The territorial distribution of discrepancies was not uniform. Some municipalities registered disproportionately high levels of corrections. Prizren leads with 68,000 changes in candidate votes – accounting for around 30% of all discrepancies. Prizren is followed by Prishtina with 20,368 deviating preferential votes, Peja with 17,125, and Malisheva with 17,014. These four municipalities alone account for more than half of all recorded changes nationwide. Other municipalities with considerable discrepancies include Podujeva (10,389), Ferizaj (9,106), Gjakova (9,240), and South Mitrovica (8,175).

| MUNICIPALITY | DIFFERENCE (negative) | DIFFERENCE (positive) | DIFFERENCE (net-total) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|  Deçan | -1476 | 1261 | 2737 |
|  Gjakova | -5151 | 4089 | 9240 |
|  Drenas | -2118 | 2402 | 4520 |
|  Gjilan | -3562 | 3943 | 7505 |
|  Dragash | -1582 | 861 | 2443 |
|  Istog | -1344 | 1591 | 2935 |
|  Kaçanik | -1572 | 1531 | 3103 |
|  Klina | -2629 | 2394 | 5023 |
|  Fushe Kosova | -1677 | 1852 | 3529 |

| MUNICIPALITY | DIFFERENCE (negative) | DIFFERENCE (positive) | DIFFERENCE (net-total) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|  Kamenica | -812 | 1117 | 1929 |
|  South Mitrovica | -4102 | 4073 | 8175 |
|  Leposaviq | -341 | 331 | 672 |
|  Lipjan | -2455 | 2901 | 5356 |
|  Novoberda | -1048 | 457 | 1505 |
|  Obiliq | -3059 | 1632 | 4691 |
|  Rahovec | -2887 | 2493 | 5380 |
|  Peja | -10068 | 7057 | 17125 |
|  Podujeva | -5741 | 4648 | 10389 |

| MUNICIPALITY | DIFFERENCE (negative) | DIFFERENCE (positive) | DIFFERENCE (net-total) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|  Prishtina | -9012 | 11356 | 20368 |
|  Prizren | -40480 | 27520 | 68000 |
|  Skenderaj | -2091 | 2037 | 4128 |
|  Shtime | -1521 | 1241 | 2762 |
|  Shterpcja | -680 | 463 | 1143 |
|  Suhareka | -3939 | 2636 | 6575 |
|  Ferizaj | -4272 | 4834 | 9106 |
|  Viti | -2775 | 3184 | 5959 |
|  Vushtrri | -2578 | 3071 | 5649 |

| MUNICIPALITY | DIFFERENCE (negative) | DIFFERENCE (positive) | DIFFERENCE (net-total) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|  Zubin Potok | -112 | 214 | 326 |
|  Zveçan | -347 | 326 | 673 |
|  Malisheva | -9044 | 7970 | 17014 |
|  Junik | -131 | 107 | 238 |
|  Mamusha | -265 | 109 | 374 |
|  Hani i Elezit | -282 | 281 | 563 |
|  Graçanica | -1110 | 668 | 1778 |
|  Ranillug | -63 | 206 | 269 |
|  Partesh | -96 | 102 | 198 |

| MUNICIPALITY | DIFFERENCE (negative) | DIFFERENCE (positive) | DIFFERENCE (net-total) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|  Klllokot | -290 | 190 | 480 |
|  North Mitrovica | -381 | 375 | 756 |

⊖ DIFFERENCE (negative)
-131093

⊕ DIFFERENCE (positive)
111523



⊘ DIFFERENCE (net-total)
242616

Table: Net difference in political entities' candidates' votes, based on candidate-level differences within each list, following the recount of ballot boxes.

At the level of political entities, discrepancies in preferential votes primarily affected the largest parties, due to the higher volume of votes they administer. The Democratic Party of Kosova has the largest net negative balance (-12,957), followed by Vetëvendosje (-4,011), the Democratic League of Kosova (-2,692) and AAK (-2,302). The changes affected the ranking of candidates within party lists, but not the overall balance of mandates among political entities.

| Political entities' candidates | Difference (net) |
|--|------------------|
| 130. DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF KOSOVA – PDK | -12957 |
| 116. VETËVENDOSJE! Movement – LVV | -4011 |
| 123. DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE OF KOSOVA – LDK | -2692 |
| 129. AAK – ALLIANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF KOSOVA | -2302 |
| 127. SRPSKA LISTA | -139 |
| 132. VAKAT COALITION | -139 |
| 133. UNITED ROMA PARTY OF KOSOVA | -53 |
| 111. NOVA DEMOKRATSKA STRANKA | -48 |
| 119. Nedžmidin Sejdlar | -1 |
| 126. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC UNION – SDU | 24 |
| 118. JEDINSTVENA GORANSKA PARTIJA | 37 |
| 120. EGYPTIAN LIBERAL PARTY | 48 |
| 121. KOSOVSKI SAVEZ | 75 |
| 112. KOSOVA DEMOKRATİK TÜRK PARTİSİ – KDTP | 76 |
| 124. Kosovaki Nevi Romani Partia | 94 |
| 131. PSA | 138 |
| 125. PAI-PDAK-LPB | 153 |
| 134. Za Slobodu Pravdu i Opstanak | 184 |
| 128. NEW DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVE OF KOSOVA | 187 |
| 117. Civic Initiative for Kosova | 216 |
| 114. FJALA | 225 |
| 115. Progressive Movement of Roma of Kosova | 330 |
| 113. National Democratic Albanian Balli Kombëtar Party | 377 |
| 122. NISMA SOCIALDEMOKRATE – NISMA | 608 |

Table: Net difference in political entities' candidates' votes, based on candidate-level differences within each list, following the recount of ballot boxes.

However, one concrete consequence of the process was a change in representation within the KDTP list, where candidate Fikrim Damka was replaced by Ergül Mazrek following the correction of preferential votes. This case demonstrates that changes in preferential votes were not merely statistical, but had direct institutional effect.

Recounts did not produce major tensions on the ground and were conducted with regular presence of observers from political parties, organizations, and the media. Transparency of procedures and continuous access to data helped maintain process stability, despite the high volume of corrections.

This development carries important institutional implications. The integrity of an electoral process is not measured only by the ability to correct errors, but by the capacity to minimize them at the initial stage. The corrective mechanism (a nationwide full recount) functioned and led the process to final results on 31 January, but the need for such a high volume of corrections makes it clear that the weakest point of election administration remains the management of preferential voting.

Overall, the post-election phase concluded with consolidated and verified results, without a legitimacy crisis and without major institutional tensions. Nevertheless, the scale of required corrections makes it clear that improving the administration of preferential voting remains one of the key priorities for future electoral cycles.

9. ELECTORAL JUSTICE

Kosova's legal framework for electoral justice provides detailed rules, procedural guidance, and expedited deadlines for the submission and adjudication of complaints at all stages of the electoral process. Stakeholders have the right to challenge inclusion or exclusion from the voters' list, the certification of political entities and candidates, violations during the campaign, irregularities on Election Day and during counting, as well as the final results announced by the Central Election Commission (CEC). The Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) constitutes the central instance for handling electoral disputes and holds full competence to review complaints against CEC decisions and violations of electoral rules. ECAP decisions may be appealed to the Supreme Court in cases involving fines above the legal threshold or where fundamental electoral rights are affected. As a permanent and independent body appointed by the Kosova Judicial Council, ECAP functions as a specialized judicial mechanism for safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process and ensuring the timely resolution of disputes.

In the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025, electoral justice was characterized by a relatively limited volume of complaints and the absence of disputes that could have jeopardized the institutional stability of the process. This represents a notable departure from several previous electoral cycles, where electoral justice became an arena for intense political confrontation. In this cycle, disputes remained largely administrative and disciplinary in nature, without systematic attempts to delegitimize the process through legal mechanisms.

From the announcement of the parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025 until the announcement of final results, the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel received and reviewed a total of 80 complaints. Most of these were related to initial decisions of the Central Election Commission, including the proportional appointment of members to Municipal Election

Commissions, certification of political entities and candidates, accreditation of observers from non-governmental organizations, approval of polling centers and polling stations outside Kosova, and ballot design.

During the campaign and post-election phases, ECAP also reviewed complaints concerning violations of campaign rules, disputes related to the counting of preferential votes in Municipal Counting Centers, as well as complaints against the final decision announcing election results.

During the electoral campaign period, held from 17 to 28 December 2025, a total of 25 complaints regarding violations of electoral rules were submitted to ECAP. Out of these, ECAP issued 16 decisions, seven of which were sanctioning decisions, eight were rejection decisions, and one case involved withdrawal of the complaint. The profile of these complaints indicates that electoral justice was used selectively to address concrete violations. Most complaints concerned the placement of campaign materials in prohibited areas, the use of public resources for electoral purposes, and the involvement of children in political activities.

Regarding political discourse, an important element for electoral justice was the absence of complaints related to inflammatory or hate speech. This constitutes a positive development compared to previous electoral cycles, where a considerable share of fines concerned precisely this category of violations. Although the absence of complaints does not exclude the existence of sporadic incidents, it indicates a higher level of restraint among political entities and a gradual normalization of public discourse. During the campaign phase, no new wave of appeals was recorded before the Supreme Court that would indicate a prolonged chain of contestation.

With regard to sanctions for violations of campaign rules, ECAP imposed fines totaling 159,500 euros. The

largest share of these sanctions concerned Srpska Lista, which was fined 147,000 euros through five decisions mainly related to the placement of campaign materials in public spaces. Lëvizja Vetëvendosje was fined a total of 10,500 euros in two separate decisions: 6,000 euros for the use of public resources and misuse of official position for electoral gain, and 4,500 euros for involving children in the electoral campaign. The Egyptian Liberal Party was fined 2,000 euros for violating ballot secrecy in diaspora voting. The structure of sanctions shows that ECAP's punitive intervention focused primarily on visible and repeated violations, particularly those related to the misuse of public spaces and official resources during the campaign.

In case A.nr.25/25, ECAP imposed a fine of 20,000 euros on Srpska Lista for placing campaign materials in prohibited public spaces, whereas in case A.nr.26/25, for a similar violation, the same entity was fined 2,000 euros. Similarly, decision A.nr.32/25 imposed a fine of 30,000 euros, decision A.nr.34/25 imposed a fine of 50,000 euros, and decision A.nr.46/25 imposed a fine of 45,000 euros for violations of the same nature.

In cases where a political entity repeatedly commits campaign violations, the sanctioning system should clearly reflect a progression of penalties to ensure proportionality and deterrent effect.

| Political Entity | Fines (€) |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Serbian List (SL) | 147,000 |
| Vetëvendosje Movement (LVV) | 10,500 |
| Egyptian Liberal Party (PLE) | 2,000 |

An analysis of decisions highlights a recurring issue in Kosova's electoral justice system, particularly the lack of consistency in imposing sanctions for similar violations. In several cases, fines for placing materials in public spaces varied significantly, without a clear proportionality standard. Effective electoral justice is measured not only by the number of fines imposed, but by coherence in reasoning and equality in the treatment of political entities.

Analysis of ECAP decisions concerning campaign violations

During the review of ECAP decisions related to violations of campaign rules for the elections of 28 December 2025, several discrepancies were identified in the manner sanctions were imposed on political entities that violated campaign regulations. In five cases where fines were imposed for placing campaign materials in public spaces, it was observed that the level of fines lacked consistency and was not always proportionate to the gravity of the violation.

This demonstrates a lack of consistency in ECAP decisions, leaving room for differing interpretations among its panels. Therefore, such decision-making practices should in the future be reviewed and analyzed more carefully and substantively by ECAP panels, since when a political entity repeatedly commits the same violation, fines should not fluctuate from higher to lower amounts, but rather follow the opposite progression.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that during the electoral campaign for the early parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025, there were no complaints and no ECAP decisions related to the use of inflammatory or hate speech. This suggests a more moderate political discourse compared to previous electoral cycles. Nevertheless, the absence of complaints does not necessarily exclude violations below the threshold of formal reporting and should therefore be assessed with caution.

Review of ECAP decisions before the Supreme Court

Data monitored through the judicial system platform for publication of judgments show that only one ECAP decision concerning fines for campaign violations was challenged before the Supreme Court. The political entity Lëvizja Vetëvendosje contested ECAP decision A.nr.41/2025 dated 26 December 2025, by which it had been fined 6,000 euros for misuse of public resources, claiming that the decision had been adopted contrary to the law and Article 36 of the Law on General Elections.

The Supreme Court, through judgment AA.nr.134/2025 dated 31 December 2025, rejected the appeal of Lëvizja Vetëvendosje as unfounded, assessing that ECAP's decision was supported by sufficient and concrete evidence.¹ According to the Court's reasoning, verification of evidence – including materials published on social media – demonstrated that candidates of the appealing political entity (Arbërie Nagavci, Hysen Durmishi, Arben Vitia, Albulena Haxhiu and Hajrulla Çeko) had promoted campaign activities within institutional public spaces, namely at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the University Clinical Center of Kosova, Prishtina International Airport, and the bridge in Mitrovica, using electoral symbols and party identification.

Complaints concerning legal violations on Election Day

During Election Day, a total of nine complaints were submitted to ECAP concerning violations of the electoral silence. Seven complaints were rejected as unfounded, while in two cases ECAP imposed fines on political entities.

Through decision A.nr.53/2025 dated 30 December 2025, ECAP imposed a fine of 1,000 euros on AAK after its parliamentary candidate Gazmend Sylja published a photograph on social media on Election Day accompanied by a call to vote.²

¹ Supreme Court of Kosovo, decision in case AA.No.134/25, dated 31 December 2025. Available at: https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/wp-content/uploads/verdicts/SUP_AA%20134_2025_SQ.pdf

² Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP), decision in case A.No.53/2025, dated 30 December 2025. Available at:

Likewise, through decision A.nr.56/2025, ECAP imposed a fine of 1,000 euros on Lëvizja Vetëvendosje for violating electoral silence after party official and municipal assembly councillor in Rahovec, Vlorë Vuçitërna, published a photograph during voting accompanied by the political message "I will not give up!"³

Complaints during counting procedures in Municipal Counting Centers and the Results and Counting Center

During the counting of candidate votes at Municipal Counting Centers (MCCs) for the parliamentary elections of 28 December 2025, approximately ten complaints were submitted to ECAP concerning the administration of this process. The vast majority were rejected as unfounded, while several were dismissed as submitted outside the legal deadline.

Among the most significant cases were complaints submitted by the Democratic Party of Kosova and its candidate Bekim Haxhiu regarding the admissibility and validity of postal votes from the diaspora. The complainants argued that, pursuant to Article 96 of the Law on General Elections, the deadline for receiving postal ballots was 29 December 2025 at 16:00, provided they bore a postal stamp prior to Election Day, and that the law did not foresee any exception or authorization allowing administrative bodies to extend this deadline.

ECAP determined that these complaints had been submitted beyond the legal 48-hour deadline from the occurrence of the alleged violation, as prescribed by Article 119 of the relevant law. Since the claims concerned ballots received on 2 and 5 January 2026, while the complaints were filed on 8 January 2026, the panel concluded that the procedural deadline had expired and rejected them as out of time.⁴

<https://smaa.rks-gov.net/documents/51552.pdf>

³ ECAP decision in case A.No.56/25, dated 30 December 2025. Available at: <https://smaa.rks-gov.net/documents/51550.pdf>

⁴ See ECAP decisions in cases A.No.69/2025, dated 9 January 2025, available at: <https://smaa.rks-gov.net/documents/51754.pdf> and decision A.No.73/2026, dated 12 January 2025, available at <https://smaa.rks-gov.net/documents/51778.pdf>

PDK subsequently appealed ECAP's decision before the **Supreme Court**, which rejected the appeal as unfounded. The Court assessed that ECAP's reasoning expressed in decision A.69/2025 was lawful and well-founded, rejecting requests to exclude and annul postal ballots received after 29 December 2025, including those received on 2 and 5 January 2026.⁵

In its reasoning, the Supreme Court emphasized that the complaint clearly challenged the acceptance of postal ballots on deadline grounds and did not refer to counting irregularities that would connect procedural deadlines to the alleged violations. According to the Court, political dissatisfaction cannot serve as grounds for denying voting rights or the counting of ballots lawfully received on 2 and 5 January 2026.

⁵ See Supreme Court of Kosovo, decision in case A.No.4/2026, dated 14 January 2026. Available at: https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/wp-content/uploads/verdicts/SUP_AA%204_2026_SQ.pdf

Complaints following the announcement of final results

On 31 January 2026, the Central Election Commission announced the final election results. This decision was accompanied by procedural disputes in two respects. First, the CEC failed to respect the 48-hour legal deadline for submitting complaints related to the recount process at the Results and Counting Center. Second, the CEC divided the procedure for announcing results by not voting on results collectively for all political entities, but instead partializing the process regarding Srpska Lista, resulting in uncertainty in the interpretation of procedural rules.

Following this decision, a total of seven complaints were submitted to ECAP. Six were rejected as unfounded, while one complaint was upheld.

At this stage, ECAP upheld the complaint of Srpska Lista and amended the CEC decision concerning the non-announcement of results for that entity. ECAP determined that final results for Srpska Lista and its candidates should have been announced simultaneously with results for all other electoral entities.⁶ In its reasoning, ECAP stated that it disagreed with the CEC's decision not to announce results for this entity, considering such action unjustified and contrary to relevant legal provisions. Since all counting and recount procedures had been completed for all political entities, the final results should have been announced immediately and in full, without exceptions.

The Panel assessed that partial announcement of results creates legal uncertainty and contradicts principles of equality among electoral contestants, transparency, and legal security of the electoral process. In this context, ECAP considered that the CEC's approach was inconsistent with standards of good electoral practice reflected in the principles of the Venice Commission.

Two other complaints were filed by parliamentary candidate Bekim Haxhiu, who sought the annulment of postal votes and the correction of seat allocation under the gender quota, claiming that the CEC had not calculated the seats correctly.

⁶ ECAP decision No. A.80/2026, dated 3 February 2026. Available at: <https://smaa.rks-gov.net/documents/51822.pdf>

Two other complaints were filed by the political entity Nova Demokratska Stranka, one relating to allegations of irregularities in the receipt of votes by the Vakaf Coalition in polling stations where there is no demographic concentration of the Bosniak community, and the other relating to the allegation that the political entity Za Slobodu Pravdu i Opstanak had gained votes irregularly in areas where there are no members of the Serb community, as well as suspicions regarding the vote calculation.

One complaint was filed by the PAI-PDAK-LPB Coalition, which alleged that the CEC had bypassed certain procedures during the counting and recounting of votes, requesting an additional recount for entities of the Ashkali and Egyptian communities, the annulment of votes in settlements where there are no members of these communities according to the latest population census data, and the repetition of elections in the respective municipalities.

Another complaint was filed by the United Roma Party of Kosovo, which alleged pronounced discrepancies in the territorial distribution of votes of another Roma entity, raising suspicions about the nature of voting in certain municipalities.

After reviewing these six cases, the ECAP issued six decisions through which it found that the complaints were unfounded and unsubstantiated, assessing that the procedures of counting, recounting, and seat allocation by the CEC had been in compliance with the legal framework.⁷

Complaints before the Supreme Court and its decisions

On 9 February 2026, the Supreme Court of Kosovo reviewed six administrative complaints filed against decisions of the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel, rejecting all of them as unfounded and confirming the legality of this institution's decision-making. The Supreme Court's decisions constitute a clear continuation of its restrictive approach toward judicial interference with election results, setting a high evidentiary standard for any claim seeking the annulment of votes.

By Judgment AA.nr.6/2026, the Court rejected the complaint of the United Roma Party of Kosovo (URPK), fully accepting the legal reasoning of the ECAP. The Court assessed that the claim that votes were disproportionate to the demographic composition of the Roma community did not constitute grounds for annulment. This interpretation reaffirms the principle that the vote is individual and is not legally tied to the voter's ethnic identity.⁸

Similarly, by Judgment AA.nr.7/2026, the Court rejected the complaint of the PAI-PDAK-LPB Coalition, finding that the complainant had presented no concrete evidence to support allegations of manipulation or irregularities in the voting process. The Court emphasized that contesting an election result requires a verifiable factual basis, and not merely suspicions or general allegations.

By Judgment A.A.nr.8/2026, the Court rejected the complaint of Emilija Rexhepi from Nova Demokratska Stranka (NDS), who had requested the annulment of 85 votes in a specific polling station and the correction of the result for the reserved seat for the Bosniak community. The Court assessed that annulling votes is an extraordinary measure that can be justified only in cases of clearly proven violations with a direct impact on the result. Accepting unsupported claims would create a dangerous precedent for legal certainty and the stability of the electoral process.⁹

⁷ See ECAP rejection decisions in cases A.No.75/2026 through A.No.79/2026, available at: <https://pzap.rks-gov.net/results/>

⁸ See Supreme Court of Kosovo, decision in case AA.No.7/2026, dated 9 February 2026. Available at: <https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/publikimet/aktgjykimet/>

⁹ Ibid., decision in case A.A.No.8/2026. Available at: <https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/publikimet/aktgjykimet/>

The Court further developed this line of reasoning in Judgment A.A.nr.9/2026, rejecting another NDS complaint. The Supreme Court stressed that the election law does not condition the validity of a vote on the voter's ethnic affiliation. A vote is considered valid as long as it has been cast by a legally registered citizen and in accordance with electoral procedures. According to the Court, only concrete and serious violations that undermine the integrity of the process can justify interference with the result, whereas arguments about the ethnic composition of voters do not constitute a constitutional or international basis for vote annulment.¹⁰

By Judgment AA.nr.10/2026, the Court rejected the complaint of PDK candidate Bekim Haxhiu concerning seat allocation under the gender quota. The Court confirmed that the electoral system requires not only formal gender representation on candidate lists, but also a real reflection of this principle in the final allocation of seats. The decision reaffirmed the interpretation that the gender quota is a structural element of the electoral system and not merely a procedural criterion.¹¹

In Judgment A.A.nr.11/2026, the Court also rejected the second complaint by the same candidate concerning the annulment of postal votes allegedly received after the legal deadline. The Supreme Court assessed that the acceptance of these votes had been based on a valid decision of the Central Election Commission, which had produced full legal effects and had not been contested within the legal time limits. The Court emphasized that the failure to use legal remedies against an administrative decision implies its acceptance and the consolidation of its legal force. Subsequent attempts to challenge the consequences of such a decision, without timely challenging the decision itself, run counter to the principles of legal certainty and legitimate expectations in the actions of public authorities¹²

¹⁰ Supreme Court of Kosovo, decision in case A.A.No.9/2026, dated 9 February 2026. Available at: <https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/publikimet/aktgjykimet/>

¹¹ Supreme Court of Kosovo, decision in case A.A.No.10/2026, dated 9 February 2026. Available at: <https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/publikimet/aktgjykimet/>

¹² Ibid., Supreme Court of Kosovo, decision in case A.A.No.11/2026, dated 9 February 2026. Available at: <https://supreme.gjyqesori-rks.org/publikimet/aktgjykimet/>

Overall, the Supreme Court's decisions during this post-election period confirm a consistent approach in electoral jurisprudence, which protects the stability of election results and sets a high threshold for judicial intervention. The Court prioritized legal certainty, proportionality, and the protection of the integrity of the vote, limiting the annulment of votes only to clearly proven cases with a direct impact on the result.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and assessments presented in this report, as well as broader developments related to the electoral process, Democracy in Action offers a set of recommendations aimed at improving the technical aspects of elections as well as the electoral system overall.

These recommendations aim to initiate a **substantive electoral reform**, which should translate into amendments to the legal framework governing elections, addressing both the technical nature of election organization and administration, as well as other political elements of the electoral system. Democracy in Action considers that electoral reform should constitute one of the key priorities of the political spectrum, grounded in the principles of inclusiveness and transparency.

As a preliminary matter, Democracy in Action considers that **priority** should be given to the following reforms:

- Fundamental reform of the preferential vote counting model for candidates, including decentralization of counting and the use of technology for electronic scanning and tabulation.
- Gradual depoliticization of election administration through a clear separation between political decision-making and technical operations within the Central Election Commission (CEC).
- Establishment of systematic quality-control mechanisms, including mandatory recounts in a defined percentage of polling stations, post-election audits, and publication of detailed data on discrepancies.
- Regulation of electoral activities outside the formal campaign period, as well as restriction of executive decisions with direct financial impact during the pre-election period.
- Strengthening transparency of campaign financing and digital campaigning, including the creation of

public archives of online advertisements, detailed expenditure reporting, and regulation of third-party campaigning.

- Reorganization of out-of-country voting through clarification of the legal basis, establishment of a permanent unit within the CEC, and systematic auditing after each electoral process.
- Ensuring coherence in electoral justice through standardization of sanctions and harmonization of practice between the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) and the Supreme Court, as well as – in the longer term – transfer of competencies to the Administrative Court.

The full recommendations presented below should be addressed by various stakeholders, including legislators, bodies responsible for organizing and administering elections, political entities and their candidates, relevant security and justice institutions, civil society, and other institutions whose mandates relate to electoral operations.

I. Structural reform of the electoral system

Democracy in Action considers it necessary that, in addition to technical improvements in election organization and administration, electoral reform should also include substantive issues that are inherently political and require constitutional and legal amendments. Among the elements of the electoral system that generate problems, particularly regarding fair citizen representation and the institutional functionality of Kosovo, and which Democracy in Action considers must be subject to reform, are:

- **Preferential voting** for up to ten candidates should be significantly reduced;
- **The electoral threshold**, including its application to different political entities such as political parties, coalitions, and independent candidates, should be recategorized;

- The **method of electing the President** of the country should be reconsidered;
- The **division into electoral districts** should be considered;
- The model of counting preferential votes should be reviewed, including consideration of **eliminating Municipal Counting Centres** and returning to a decentralized counting system at polling stations, supported by **scanning and electronic counting technology**.

II. General legal framework and institutional model

- **A unified electoral code should be drafted consolidating all regulatory provisions into a single document**.
- The codification practice is recommended by OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission to ensure legal clarity and legal certainty.
- Issues directly affecting electoral rights – such as certification of political entities and candidates, interpretation of legal eligibility conditions, or other passive electoral rights – should be **transferred to the competence of the Administrative Court** through special procedures with optimal deadlines. Until this change is implemented, ECAP **capacities during electoral periods should be strengthened**.
- **The composition and institutional model of the CEC should be reviewed with the aim of gradual depoliticization and strengthening the professional and judicial role of election administration**. Institutional debate should be opened on alternative models of organizing election administration, including the possibility of a more flexible structure activated primarily during electoral periods, with a composition dominated by independent professionals and representatives of the judicial system. Such a model should aim for the majority of CEC members to be non-political professionals meeting clear integrity criteria.

- **Legal eligibility criteria should be strengthened** by prohibiting candidacy of individuals convicted of criminal offenses involving abuse of official duty – regardless of the type or severity of the sentence imposed.

III. Electoral integrity and administration

- **The boundaries between the political role of the CEC and technical election administration operations should be more clearly defined**, ensuring that operational decisions fall within the competence of professional structures.
- **Automatic recount mechanisms should be introduced**. Legislation should provide for mandatory recounting of at least 5% of polling stations nationwide after each electoral process. This recount should be conducted automatically on a statistical sampling basis.
- **A Code of Conduct for CEC members should be adopted regulating discourse and language during CEC meetings**. The Code should include sanctions in cases of violations – particularly regarding the possibility of dismissal by the President.
- **A specific act should be adopted regulating recruitment and training of election management bodies**, especially administrative bodies and counting teams, including minimum qualifications, conflict-of-interest rules, gender equality standards, community representation, and performance evaluation.
- **A structured quality-control system should be established throughout all phases of the electoral process**, including monitoring performance of election management bodies and counting teams, mechanisms for immediate intervention in case of deviations, and standardized post-election performance assessment. This system should also include disciplinary measures for election administration members who fail to fulfil duties or act negligently. In cases of serious violations or unsatisfactory performance, temporary restriction or exclusion from future electoral engagement should

be foreseen – following a “blacklist” model. **Të përcaktohet me akt normativ detyrimi për hartimin dhe publikimin e një raporti të standardizuar paszgjedhor nga KQZ-ja**, që përfshin vlerësim të plotë të të gjitha fazave të procesit, analizë të mospërputhjeve dhe plan masash për përmirësim.

- **A normative act should establish the obligation for the CEC to draft and publish a standardized post-election report**, including a comprehensive assessment of all phases of the process, analysis of discrepancies, and an improvement action plan.
- A mandatory standard should be introduced for **publishing detailed data on discrepancies, recount cases, and final results of all ballot boxes processed at the Counting and Results Centre**. Publication should be in open data format and accompanied by explanations for each case to strengthen transparency and public trust.
- **Interpretation of voter identification rules should be obligatorily standardized**. The CEC should adopt detailed and binding guidelines regarding expired documents, applied uniformly across all polling stations. Training of commissioners should include practical simulations to prevent inconsistent field interpretation.
- **The use of marking ink should be reviewed**. Any voter identification mechanism must be certified and compliant with personal data protection and ballot secrecy standards. The use of marking pencils should be reconsidered and replaced with electronic voter identification.
- The CEC should guarantee **appropriate physical infrastructure** ensuring accessibility in every polling station and accessible voting formats for persons with disabilities.
- **A National Electoral Education Plan for citizens should be developed and continuously implemented**. The plan should be inclusive, with standardized materials adapted for different target groups and implemented in cooperation with CSOs and educational institutions.

Voter List:

- **A permanent inter-institutional system should be developed and adopted for periodic cleaning of the voter list through automatic and mandatory data exchange between the CEC, Civil Registration Agency, Statistics Agency, Kosovo Judicial Council, and the Pension Department**. The system should rely on agreed protocols for identifying and removing deceased voters, legally incapacitated persons, and duplicate records. Verification should be continuous, not limited to pre-election periods.
- A periodic **institutional audit mechanism of the Voter List** should be established through statistical and inter-institutional comparative analyses, with publication of findings and technical recommendations for updating registers, strengthening public trust and data coherence.
- The **existing e-Kosova platform should be expanded to include an electoral module** enabling citizens to verify voter list status, receive notifications when voting rights are exercised (if applicable), apply for and track out-of-country voting in real time, identify polling stations, receive automatic notifications on approval/rejection of requests, and communicate directly with election administration.

Out-of-country voting:

- **The legal basis for locations of polling stations abroad should be definitively clarified**. The law must clearly determine whether in-person voting abroad may take place exclusively within diplomatic missions or also in other premises.
- **Institutional responsibilities between the CEC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora should be further regulated**. The CEC should retain full authority over organizational and operational aspects of voting in embassies, while the Ministry remains solely a logistical support body, in line with legal provisions and international standards.

- **A dedicated permanent unit within the CEC responsible for out-of-country voting should be established**. Organization of diaspora voting should not be improvised from one election to another. A permanent operational structure specialized in diaspora voting should be created, with multi-year planning and standardized protocols.
- **An independent and systematic audit of the entire out-of-country voting process should be conducted after every election** through a legally defined mechanism, covering registration data, postal procedures, and envelope transport chains, with public publication to enhance credibility.

IV. Electoral Campaign

- **The distribution of financial benefits by the executive to citizens within a defined period before elections should be prohibited by law**. A clear legal moratorium should be established on executive decisions with direct financial impact on specific categories of citizens during the period from the announcement of Election Day, except in emergency cases justified by law.
- **The pre-campaign period should be regulated through clear legislation, in order to prevent the misuse of this phase by political entities and to ensure equality in the race**. The regulation should define which activities constitute early campaigning, as well as standards for financial transparency, the use of public resources, and sanctions in cases of violations.
- **Transparency and oversight of campaign financing should be strengthened** by obliging political entities to submit detailed weekly reports during the campaign period, including all online and offline expenditures, with immediate publication on the official websites of the CEC and political parties.
- **A practice should be established of organizing public debates between main candidates**, organized by the media (especially the public

broadcaster), with equal participation, in order to enable citizens to compare platforms in an informed manner

Financing of political entities during the campaign

- The financing of political entities, especially during the campaign period, should be advanced. **Political entities should open separate bank accounts for financing and expenditures during the campaign**, which should be transparent and accessible to the public, on the CEC website, another portal, or on the websites of the political entity itself or its candidates.
 - a) **Another alternative** could be the **full operationalization of an electronic system for campaign financial reporting—on a weekly basis**—integrated into the CEC platform, which would enable the submission, review, and immediate publication of data by political entities. The platform should be public and accessible for monitoring.
- The issue of **financial disclosure for candidates of political entities must be regulated**, including personal income and expenditures during the campaign period.
- Regulating of **third-party campaigning should be incorporated into election legislation**, by establishing obligations for declaration, transparency of financial sources, and reporting of expenditures, with the aim of preventing circumvention of legal limitations.
- **Separate public funds should be allocated for the campaigns of women candidates**, by creating a public financing scheme that aims to empower women in political competition and reduce structural financial inequalities.
- Political entities should **make transparent the manner in which they distribute their funds to women candidates**, in order to ensure equal support for all candidates.

V. Gender Representation

- **Legal amendments should be adopted that transform the 30% quota for women on electoral lists into a progressive objective toward equal representation (50/50)**, in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality. This change should be accompanied by provisions that prohibit lists with repeated minimal representation and that encourage gender rotation in top positions on lists.
- **The Law on Gender Equality should be implemented at all levels of the election administration**, including the Central Election Commission, Municipal Election Commissions, and Polling Station Councils. This implementation should include an obligation for balanced gender representation in composition and leadership, with annual monitoring reports.

VI. Electoral Justice

- **Provisions on fines should be reviewed and standardized, by limiting discretion and linking sanctions to measurable and unified criteria.** The ECAP should apply a fine-grading system for each type of violation, which clearly defines minimum and maximum thresholds, based on factors such as repetition of the violation, public impact, dissemination through the media, and failure to undertake corrective measures. The sanctions regulation should be public and updated, to avoid arbitrary decision-making and to ensure proportionality.
- **Decision-making standards between the ECAP and the Supreme Court should be harmonized to ensure a uniform and coherent approach to electoral justice.** The Judicial Council, through joint trainings and comparative analyses of judicial practice, should contribute to building stable and predictable jurisprudence that respects the right to appeal, while also protecting the integrity of the electoral process.
- **The mechanism for referring criminal cases to the Prosecutor's Office by election institutions should be improved.** The ECAP and the CEC should have a clear cooperation protocol with the State

Prosecutor for reporting cases that contain elements of criminal offences. This protocol should include criteria for identifying suspicions, the referral format, and deadlines for institutional action.

- **A catalogue of hate speech expressions and discriminatory expressions should be drafted and adopted in accordance with international and constitutional standards on freedom of expression.** This catalogue would serve as an official reference for responsible institutions, providing clear definitions of inciting language, hate speech, and expressions that constitute discrimination against vulnerable groups. The document should be prepared in cooperation with justice institutions, media representatives, civil society organizations, and human rights experts, and adopted as an annex or implementation guideline for the ECAP and the CEC.
- *(In case the transfer of competencies to the Administrative Court is not realized)* **The institutional capacity of the ECAP should be strengthened through increasing professional staff and technical resources**, in order to guarantee fast, uniform, and predictable handling of complaints.

Annex 1: Certified Election Results and Allocation of Seats by Political Entities

| Political Entity | Number of votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|---|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| VETËVENDOSJE! Movement | 487,077 | 51,10% | 57 |
| DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF KOSOVA – PDK | 192,434 | 20,19% | 22 |
| DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE OF KOSOVA – LDK | 126,163 | 13,24% | 15 |
| AAK – ALLIANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF KOSOVA | 52,423 | 5,50% | 6 |
| SRPSKA LISTA | 42,759 | 4,49% | 9 |
| NISMA SOCIALDEMOKRATE - NISMA | 15,189 | 1,59% | 0 |
| KOSOVA DEMOKRATİK TÜRK PARTİSİ | 5,410 | 0,57% | 2 |
| Za Slobodu Pravdu i Opstanak | 4,862 | 0,51% | 1 |
| KOALICIJA VAKAT | 3,983 | 0,42% | 1 |
| NOVA DEMOKRATSKA STRANKA | 3,920 | 0,41% | 1 |
| NEW DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVE OF KOSOVA | 2,768 | 0,29% | 1 |
| SOCIJALDEMOKRATSKA UNIJA – SDU | 2,613 | 0,27% | 1 |
| EGYPTIAN LIBERAL PARTY | 2,252 | 0,24% | 1 |
| PSA | 2,059 | 0,22% | 1 |
| JEDINSTVENA GORANSKA PARTIJA | 1,547 | 0,16% | 1 |
| Progressive Movement of Roma of Kosovo | 1,173 | 0,12% | 1 |
| UNITED ROMA PARTY OF KOSOVO | 929 | 0,10% | 0 |
| PARTIA BALLI KOMBËTAR DEMOKRAT SHQIPTAR | 919 | 0,10% | 0 |
| FJALA | 904 | 0,09% | 0 |
| Civic Initiative for Kosova | 793 | 0,08% | 0 |
| KOSOVSKI SAVEZ | 537 | 0,06% | 0 |
| Nedžmidin Sejdilar | 268 | 0,03% | 0 |
| Kosovaki Nevi Romani Partia | 227 | 0,02% | 0 |



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